

**The Calamity in Portland—Almost Total Annihilation of an American Commercial City—Appeal to the Benevolence of New York.**

We published yesterday accounts of the terrible conflagration which commenced in the city of Portland, Maine, on the evening of the Fourth of July, and had not been extinguished at the closing of our latest despatch. The fire commenced in a small wooden building, and under the pressure of a strong gale of wind swept down upon one-third of the city. The burnt district extends already a mile and a half in one direction and a quarter of a mile in another. It embraces not only the principal business portion of the city, including banks, warehouses, hotels, churches, &c., but also the residences of merchants and others, thus occasioning a double affliction, depriving citizens not only of their places of business but of their homes—literally burning them out of houses and stores. Two thousand families, or, estimating each family to be composed of five persons, ten thousand individuals, including women and children, are rendered houseless by this dire calamity. Most of the provision stores and markets have been consumed, and therefore consequently a great lack of food as well as shelter among the destitute. Briefly, a state of famine and destitution prevails in a once thriving American commercial city.

What is the duty of the commercial metropolis of the country upon a melancholy occasion like this? The answer will come home to every philanthropic heart. It is to render promptly material assistance to the sufferers. The city of New York, the first among American cities, should be among the leading cities to advance the required aid. Our active merchants have never been slow to respond to an appeal like this; our retired merchants have always responded nobly on such occasions; our millionaires have invariably taken part in bestowing a share of the blessings of wealth upon a stricken community, and the local authorities have seized such opportunities to accomplish some good for their suffering fellow-creatures. Let them and all our charitably disposed citizens take immediate steps toward relieving the suffering citizens of Portland in this lamentable calamity. We are glad to perceive that Mr. Hoffman, with that instinctive sentiment of philanthropy and justice which actuates his public acts, has issued a proclamation calling upon our citizens to contribute their aid to this cause; and we trust it will be cordially received and responded to. Contributions will be sent free by express and steamships to the afflicted population of Portland. Let it but be remembered that a visitation like this upon the city of New York would comparatively render three hundred and fifty thousand people houseless and destroy one-third of the business portion of the metropolis, and we are confident our citizens will unanimously come forward and extend the required relief.

**Fire-Eaters Wanted in Washington.**

There are a number of Southern fire-eaters of the blood-and-thunder order scattered over the seceded States. Since the close of the war they have been out of employment, and consequently seedy, thirsty and hard-up. When the rebellion lasted they seldom or never showed themselves at the front; but there was plenty of occupation for them in the rear, where they hung Union men, confiscated property, robbed and persecuted women and children, whipped and fayed negroes, enjoyed themselves hugely and lived upon the fat of the land and the best in the market. The contrast between this happiness and their present forlorn condition is deplorable. They dare not interfere with the negroes, except in remote corners of the South where United States officials do not yet appear; and they cannot even get up a decent fight, except against themselves, as in the recent case of the *Pardals* at Richmond. Poor, moody, out at elbows out of liquors and out of business, these fire-eaters do not know what to do with the selves.

Let us give them a bit of practical advice. They are wanted at Washington, and can make money there without having to earn it by hard work—to which no true fire-eater would consent. At Washington there are a lot of radical Congressmen, all anxious for renomination, and all extremely doubtful about their chances of getting it. They find that nothing will save them from oblivion except some stirring excitement that shall make martyrs of them, and cause an outburst of popular sympathy in their favor. For a good flogging, a trifling and not very painful stab, a pistol shot, aimed at some portion of the anatomy, not necessarily vital, they will go roundly. If the attack upon them could be made by a notorious Southerner and were performed in public and accompanied by the phrase, "Let me kill this great Union patriot or words to that effect, five hundred dollars would not be too much for the job. But Wade tried this dodge some time ago, by representing that a visitor who came to ask him a political favor was an assassin, determined to deprive the Union of the services of the immortal Wade. This worked very well for while, until somebody exposed it. In the absence of any fire-eaters Grinnell got himself named by General Rosecan; but unfortunately he timed the affair wrongly, and another man was being nominated in Iowa at about the time that Grinnell was being flogged in Washington. Still, all the country papers said that Grinnell would have been renominated had the intelligence reached Iowa soon enough. Instead of insulting our brave generals let the radical Congressmen employ regular fire-eaters to make martyrs of them, and they can be flogged at any moment they like, and thus secure their renominations.

**Amusements.**

**THE MATINEES TO-DAY.**

At Woods' theatre, Broadway, Mr. Barton Hill, comedian, gives his last representations of Brother S—to-day, at the matinee and in the evening. The *Widow's Sisters* will also perform. Fra Diavolo and Brother S will be played at the matinee.

The first matinee performance of the season at Foster's Opera House, in the Bowery, takes place at an early hour this afternoon. The programme includes the *City Messenger*, *Stamping the Country*, *Ozello*, *La Nabette*, *Explos of Spiritism* and other pieces.

Charles White's combination troupe will appear in midday performance at Mechanics' (Bryant's) Hall, Broadway, commencing at half past two o'clock. There will be a grand ballet and many other attractions.

Mr. Theodore Thomas will give a *Matinee* at Kew-Terrace Garden, on Third avenue, at four o'clock and evening performance at eight. His orchestral garden concerts have become quite popular, and furnish excellent music to the large audiences which nightly resort to them.

An orchestral concert will be given at Lion Park, on